

Kentucky Teacher

FINAL
Print Issue

October 2010

News for the Nation's Most Innovative Educators

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1992 ...



Kentucky Teacher ends print edition, goes online

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Kentucky Teacher

News for the Nation's Most Innovative Educators

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Kentucky Teacher ends print edition, goes online

**Web site www.kentuckyteacher.org
launches Nov. 2**

Dear Reader,

Due to recent budgetary concerns and a desire to offer our audience wider, more diverse features, *Kentucky Teacher* will discontinue the printed version of the publication and move to an online-only format beginning in November 2010.

To effectively transition from the paper publication, which has been produced under this nameplate since 1992, I'd like to take an opportunity to explain how the new Web publication will work and tell you about online features we hope to offer you in the future.

Kentucky Teacher is a professional development tool for teachers. As such, it focuses on the work of highly qualified, successful educators to improve teaching and learning in Kentucky public schools.

Kentucky Teacher also has focused on items related to the Department of Education's and Kentucky Board of Education's work including Senate Bill 1, Race to the Top, strategic plans and more.

The online publication will continue to offer feature articles that provide descriptive narratives about successful classroom practice, information about resources, recognition of outstanding efforts and more. News items will be posted regularly along with more frequent updates to the Bulletin Board and Leadership Letter items currently included in every printed issue.

In addition to the features you're accustomed to seeing in the print edition, the Web publication of *Kentucky Teacher* will offer readers interactivity with leadership, photo slideshows, digital archives, RSS feeds, the opportunity to comment on features stories and photos and more.

As a result of these changes, *Kentucky Teacher's* online edition will be more robust, which means you will get news that matters to your day-to-day work in the classroom in a timelier manner. Readers will be able to sign up at www.kentuckyteacher.org to receive notifications in their e-mail inboxes when the website is updated with new content.

These changes will enable *Kentucky Teacher* to fulfill its mission of professional development for our readers and serve as a repository of best practices while also becoming financially sustainable.

We need you, as readers and partners, to continue to support *Kentucky Teacher* by visiting www.kentuckyteacher.org. This partnership has been essential to the success of *Kentucky Teacher* and will be to its future.

Thanks to all who read *Kentucky Teacher*; we're confident the new online version will continue to provide invaluable perspective to help you grow and thrive in your classroom and your school.

Please let the *Kentucky Teacher* staff know what you think about the new format by writing to kyteacher@education.ky.gov.

Stephanie Siria
Editor

Dear Reader,

Kentucky Teacher was born in November 1992, and I've been involved with it since the beginning.

Back then, we laid out each issue by hand. Photographs were black and white, and if there was line art included, it was hand-drawn. We were grateful to be able to add a single color to a page. There were "blue-line" proofs of each page, which were packed up and delivered to our printer. We wrote our stories using typewriters or dumb terminals

connected to a mainframe computer. Editing was accomplished with gallons of red ink.

Now, we're entering the online publishing phase, and I'll admit that I'm a little nostalgic for the early days of the publication. But, my nostalgia is tempered by excitement for this next phase.

In my 25 years at the Kentucky Department of Education, I've witnessed many changes in the area of communications. The speed with which we share information, the means by which we share it and the tailoring of items to meet specific needs have all changed, mostly for the better.

The changes to *Kentucky Teacher* are for the better, too. Although they are greatly driven by financial considerations, they will enable the publication to be more vibrant, topical and on-target.

This may be our last printed version of *Kentucky Teacher*, but the mission of the publication will remain unchanged: to provide you with solid information and real-life examples of the best teaching practices. I hope that our loyal readers will enjoy the new format and find even more to like in the online version.

Lisa Y. Gross, Director
Division of Communications and
Community Engagement



Photo by Amy Wallot

First day of school

Sree Turlapati tells his son Nihar Turlapati goodbye as he drops him off in kindergarten teacher Allison Hall's classroom during the first day of school at Collins Lane Elementary School (Franklin County) on Aug. 9.

COMMISSIONER'S COMMENTS

By Terry Holliday, Ph.D., Commissioner of Education

High school class of 2010: What does its future look like?

Over the past few weeks, several reports have spurred me to consider the outlook for our most recent graduating class of Kentucky students.

Readers should consider how they would feel if they had a child or relative in the Class of 2010 who recently graduated from a Kentucky high school.



Holliday

- For every 1,000 9th-graders who entered high school in the 2006-07 school year, only 740 actually graduated in 2010.
- Of the 740 who graduated, 670 indicated they would attend two- or four-year postsecondary institutions; however, only 592 will actually attend a postsecondary institution.
- Of the 592, 112 will attend two-year colleges, and only 18 of the 112 will be college-ready (no remediation courses).
- Of the 480 graduates who will attend four-year colleges, only 237 will be college-ready (no remediation courses).
- Of the 112 graduates attending two-year colleges, only 67 will return for the second year of school.
- Of the 480 attending four-year colleges, only 340 will return for the second year.
- Of the 112 attending two-year colleges, only 26 will graduate within three years with a degree.
- Of the 480 attending four-year colleges, only 225 will graduate within six years.

In summary, of the 1,000 high school freshmen from 2006-07 who entered with dreams of college and career, only 251 will achieve their dream of a two- or four-year degree within three or six years of graduation from high school. What will happen to the other 749?

If Kentucky demographics can predict the future, then 80 will not have a high school diploma; 370 will have a high school diploma but no college credits; 210 will have a high school diploma and some college; and 90 will have a GED by the time they reach age 34.

In years past, this scenario may not have concerned parents; however, a report from the Center on Education and Workforce at Georgetown University predicts 63 percent of jobs in 2018 will require a two- or four-year postsecondary degree, and more than 80 percent of jobs will require postsecondary degrees and/or technical training. So, it

appears that for Kentucky to have a competitive employment and strong economy, about 800 of the 1,000 graduates really need postsecondary and/or technical training beyond high school.

However, we are projecting that only 251 will achieve the two- or four-year degree, and 210 will have some training beyond high school, for a total of 461 students possibly ready for 800 jobs. Where will employers get the other 339 employees? As I talk to employers now, they tell me they are either importing the employees or have to provide significant training and education to prospective employees at a high cost that impacts the competitive ability of the business.

As much of a concern should be the remaining 539 students who do not have two- or four-year degrees and/or some training beyond high school. More than 200 of them will settle for low-skill and low-wage jobs that do not pay a living wage for a family. The remainder (340) will strain the state's budget through unemployment and medical, criminal and social costs.

But here's why I have hope for how we can turn things around.

- Parents and the public get it, as evidenced from the *Achieving the Possible: What Americans Think About the College- and Career-Ready Agenda* report from Achieve Inc.
- There is widespread agreement (almost 90 percent) that all students need additional education and training beyond high school.
- Support for policies aimed to prepare high school students for college and careers is broad, deep and fully bipartisan with equally high numbers of Democratic, Republican and independent voters supporting such (almost 90 percent for each group).

- There is strong support (two-thirds of respondents) for the specific policies that put common expectations in place for all students – including common standards, common assessments and graduation requirements among all states.

- More generally, there is near-universal agreement across partisan, ethnic/racial and geographic lines that some education and training beyond high school is necessary – and that stronger expectations in high school will go a long way toward preparing students for their next steps.

The central question for us in Kentucky is not whom is to blame for these results, but what are we going to do about these results? There are those who will say we cannot fund or support schools and colleges to improve these results and prepare our children for the future; however, if we do not work to support improvements in outcomes, then we will probably be sending our children forward to

a continuing recession and loss of America's leadership among world economies.

The Kentucky Board of Education and the Kentucky Department of Education released the first college- and career-ready report in late September that showed results for each high school and district in Kentucky. We're also adopting a new accountability system that focuses on improving the college- and career-ready rates for Kentucky high school graduates. Numerous regulations and support mechanisms will be put in place; however, the ultimate work is in every school and district in Kentucky. This work does not belong just to high schools and colleges – every parent, school, teacher, business leader and politician in Kentucky must work together to impact the future for our children. What will YOU do to support the children?

(To comment on this topic, contact Commissioner Holliday at terry.holliday@education.ky.gov.)



Photo by Amy Wallot

Story hour

Monticello Elementary School (Monticello Independent) 1st-grade teacher Marilyn Rush laughs with student Madison Hall as Hall tells a story about her dog. The students were learning about sentences, then acting as authors and telling a story about their pets to the class.

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New standards, targets drive improved teaching

By Matthew Tungate

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Teachers from across the state are spending this year transforming Kentucky's new Core Academic Standards into usable learning targets – and developing the best ways to teach them.

Rebecca Potter, an 18-year veteran who teaches senior English and newspaper journalism at Letcher County Central High School, said integrating both content and technique can only benefit teachers.

"Often we are exposed to content and to quality teaching, but rarely at the same time. We take the content and combine (it) with the techniques that seem to work for us," she said. "However, sometimes we can get stuck in a rut, and we don't expose our students to a variety of techniques that may enhance their learning. Hopefully, this strategy will give us an opportunity to grow as teachers."

After 16 years in elementary and middle school education, Campton Elementary School (Wolfe County) teacher Daphne Patton believes that learning the new content and new techniques at the same time is a good approach.

"Unlike the gradual phase-in process of new techniques and/or strategies of the past, everyone should be receiving the same information to disseminate and process within their respective districts at the same time," said Patton, who teaches 5th-grade social studies and language arts.

But how they process and disseminate that information will vary from district to district under the capacity-building model Kentucky is using to implement the new standards, according to Karen Kidwell, project manager for Leadership Networks at the Kentucky Department of Education.

The 2009 General Assembly mandated that Kentucky schools use new academic standards beginning with the 2011-12 school year. Earlier this year, Kentucky became the first state in the country to adopt mathematics and English/language arts standards that were developed by a multi-state

consortium. The new standards, though fewer in number, are supposed to allow deeper instruction at the classroom level.

To help teachers learn and understand the new standards, the Kentucky Department of Education formed networks for school and district administrators and for teachers. Districts selected three teachers for each of the subject areas to receive training through the eight educational cooperatives. As members of the leadership networks, teachers are expected to:

- agree on the intent of the standards in terms of what students must demonstrate as evidence of success
- break down or deconstruct standards into clear learning targets
- design high-quality formative and summative assessments
- plan rigorous and congruent learning experiences for instruction
- select evidence-based strategies and resources to enhance instruction
- support other educators in their districts as they do these same processes

Kidwell said teachers in the networks, including Patton and Porter, will meet for six days during the year and again over the summer.

"The whole point of this is we're developing district capacity," she said.

Kidwell said teachers in the leadership network will test the techniques they are learning and work with their counterparts in the other two leadership networks using existing mechanisms in each school and district to train their fellow teachers.

"This won't look like a brand new thing necessarily," she said.

Potter likes the capacity-building approach because more people are involved in the process.

"The team can make decisions together and present together," she said. "People on that team become touchstones for others in the district as they begin the task of working with the new standards and learning more effective teaching strategies."



Photo by Amy Wallot

Letcher County Central High School language arts teacher Rebecca Potter, left, mathematics teacher Faye Collier, center, and Principal Denise Yonts discuss the new language arts standards. Teachers from across the state are spending this year transforming Kentucky's new Core Academic Standards into usable learning targets and developing the best ways to teach them.

"We need to make better teachers in every classroom regardless of what standards they're teaching."

Karen Kidwell,
project manager
for Leadership Networks,
Kentucky Department of
Education

Patton agreed.

"It seems that this time we are trying to build something from the ground up instead of just saying, 'Okay. Here are your new standards – teach and good luck on the test,'" she said. "Keeping teachers informed and part of the overall process can only be a good thing."

Kidwell said the Department of Education is trying to make sure

the best information, the best strategies and best resources are available to teachers.

"If it were all just a matter of handing people new standards, you could train them," she said. "But our problem isn't the standards; it wasn't even the old standards. The problem was we need to impact classroom practice. We need to make better teachers in every classroom regardless of what standards they're teaching."

Kidwell said the Department of Education, based on the leadership networks' work, will try to provide resources for teachers, including:

- learning progressions
- learning targets
- aligned assessment items
- model lesson plans/learning experiences
- sample course designs, especially for high school
- crosswalks

Because the new standards won't be assessed until the 2011-12 school year, teachers should have time to learn the new standards and the improved teaching techniques, Kidwell said.

Porter said teachers are anxious about reconfiguring their teaching to meet the new standards. That's why she thinks they will benefit from the work of the leadership

networks.

"I think teachers will have a deconstructed curriculum that they can pick up and use," she said. "They will know what it will take to make their students career and college ready."

Kidwell expects the leadership networks to have broken the standards into key learning targets by December. Many of the standards are already very understandable, Kidwell said. But some of the standards are taught in different grades than they have been, so "a lot of people are going to be asked to teach things they've never taught in the past."

"With the standards being more rigorous and kind of shifting down, that's going to be new content to many teachers, so we really want to take the time on the front end to make sure we are building content knowledge as well," she said.

Patton said teachers should remember that the changes in the standards and teaching techniques aren't that different from what they have been doing.

"Much of the content we are teaching is still very much in place. Adjustments will need to be made as far as when concepts are introduced, taught, mastered and reinforced," she said. "The biggest change for me so far seems to be not in the way we teach, but the way we assess our students. Learning to better assess my students will make me a better teacher. Also, the support we will receive as far as teaching strategies and techniques will help many to become more comfortable from the onset with the new materials."

MORE INFO...

<http://go.usa.gov/cdm>
www.corestandards.org

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Business as usual

Daviess County teacher inspires students through technology

By Susan Riddell

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Jackie Revlett had trouble selecting a major while she was attending Murray State University. She went from music therapy to nursing to accounting to computer science.

Knowing she came from a family heavy in educators, one of Revlett's sorority sisters recommended business education, and for the past 23 years, Revlett has taught business education in the Daviess County school district.

Revlett has been at Daviess County High School after spending her first nine years at Apollo High School. Earlier this year, she was named the Kentucky Society for Technology in Education outstanding teacher.

"Jackie is an inspirational leader in the field of technology," Daviess County High business teacher Barney Hall said. "She is a role model for classroom teachers integrating technology into the curriculum and using technology to help students reach their full potential."

"Her classroom is an exciting place where students are encouraged and challenged to use technology as a resource and tool for learning," Hall added. "Her students are excited to walk into her classroom every day because they are looking forward to the challenges that she presents."

Revlett teaches Financial Services 1 and 2, Financial Accounting 2, Help Desk and Computer Applications at Daviess County High, along with serving as Business Academy dean. She said she's fortunate to be in a district that offers every high school student their own laptop for four years.

"Technology is at the center of instruction and learning, which makes business education even more of an integral part of a child's high school education," Revlett said. "Our Computer Applications course is a required course for graduation, and it also is an articulated course for college credit with Owensboro Career and Technical College."

While her top priority is her students, Rev-



Photo by Amy Wallot

Business teacher Jackie Revlett speaks to students during her Computer Applications class at Daviess County High School. "We want our business students to graduate with the skills necessary for the workforce," she said. "We must prepare them all with the skills they need to succeed."

lett also works with teachers at the school in fulfilling their technological needs.

"Through the benefits of technology, she works constantly to support staff and students and helps them solve serious problems," Principal Anthony Sparks said. "Many times, resolving these issues leads to increased efficiency and production. At other times, Jackie's work focuses on helping teachers become better teachers."

"No matter the issue, Jackie demonstrates professionalism in every way. Her commitment to technology, and the power that it can bring, is quite admirable. While serving as Business Academy Dean and teacher, Jackie always has improvement on her mind."

Revlett said the most important thing for business teachers to remember is to adjust to technological advances and the times in which we live.

"Technology has directly impacted the direction for teaching in business education," she said. "Each year brings new changes and challenges, but it makes the teaching of business exciting. Business educators must be willing to accept change and to learn, and must also stay in direct touch with the needs of industry."

"Gone are the days of typewriting and shorthand," Revlett added. "Currently, a business educator must be comfortable with a multitude of software application packages; knowledgeable of Web

applications and Web design; be able to teach a working knowledge of accounting concepts; help students critically analyze financial statements in industry; understand the impact of multimedia and digital imaging in business; and continue to share with students the importance of a strong work ethic, teamwork and networking in building relationships in the workplace."

To help her students get ready for the workplace, Revlett makes students apply for jobs in the Financial Services class. The

process begins with students filling out a job application and a resume, and then they interview with Revlett and a representative from a local bank.

"Considering that this is a capstone course in our program and students have completed resumes and applications prior to this course, I give minimal instruction for preparation of these documents," Revlett said. "Their submitted credentials and interview must be high-quality in order for them to prove that they would be the best employee for the job. To me, I'm preparing them for the workforce. They will not have someone coaching and rewriting their resumes prior to most employment opportunities."

After jobs are assigned, Revlett meets with each student to provide feedback so they can improve on the next interview.

Revlett also values working with teachers in other content areas. In the past, her Financial Accounting 2 class has helped the school's athletic director analyze transportation expenses monthly for specific athletic teams.

One of Revlett's favorite collaborative efforts was a project called "Dirt to Dollars" that involved six teachers from business, agriculture and science classes working together to make items sold by the Daviess County High School Greenhouse, a school-based business.

"Our marketing class promoted the sale, and my accounting class recorded the revenue, expenses and financial statements," Revlett said. "It was exciting to have so many students and teachers working together to promote a school-based business."

"We want our business students to graduate with the skills necessary for the workforce," Revlett added. "Our students are a beautiful mixture of college-bound students, students who will pursue military service and students who will graduate and go directly into the workforce. We must prepare them all with the skills they need to succeed."

"Jackie is an inspirational leader in the field of technology."

Barney Hall,
business teacher
Daviess County High School

Revlett's advice for new business education teachers

- Don't be afraid to admit that you can learn from the students. Young adults are very tech-savvy. Let students be creative and think out of the box. Utilize their energy and recognize the students as a valuable resource for learning. Technology changes too fast for teachers to think they know it all.
- Get your students involved in the Future Business Leaders of America organization. It will foster relationship-building with other students and provide wonderful networking opportunities with other business educators throughout Kentucky and the U.S.
- Network with other business teachers across school districts and, if applicable, within a school district. Collaboration and idea-sharing can be a teacher's best resource.

MORE INFO...

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Meet new board members Jones, Twyman

In July, Gov. Steve Beshear named five new members and reappointed two members to the Kentucky Board of Education. To give educators throughout the state the opportunity to learn more about the men and women who serve on the state board, *Kentucky Teacher* presents a series of questions and answers with new board members. In this issue we introduce Martha Jones and William Twyman.

Jones believes students succeed with parent, community support

Martha Jones, of Boyd County, represents the 7th Supreme Court District. She is a former social worker and continuing education counselor. She also worked with Friends of the Children, a non-profit organization in Ashland, to assist disadvantaged schoolchildren. Jones' term will expire April 14, 2014.



Jones

In your opinion, what makes Kentucky schools tick?

The ability to change directions to better meet the needs of the students in an ever-changing global economy.

Why is what you do as a board member important to teachers today?

The board will play an important role in supporting teachers to help them meet the challenges of preparing students for success in the 21st century.

Where is education in Kentucky headed?

With the Transforming Education in Kentucky (TEK) initiative and with the support of teachers, hopefully Kentucky will implement new strategies to better prepare students to compete in the global economy.

What impact do you hope to bring to the board in the immediate future?

An emphasis on supporting students with learning disabilities.

What do you want Kentucky's past and current teachers to know about you?

I understand the challenges of those teaching students with learning disabilities.

Other than more money, what do Kentucky schools need most?

The support of parents and the community.

What are the biggest obstacles facing Kentucky children?

Gaining the skills necessary to achieve success in higher education.

What long-term goals do you have as a member of the board?

To support those who will develop and implement new strategies. The work of the TEK task force is very important.

What personal trait will serve you best as a board member?

Caring for students with learning disabilities.

How will you know that the board has been successful?

As pointed out by Gov. Beshear and Dr. Holliday, we must dramatically increase the number of students who obtain postsecondary and/or technical training beyond high school. Currently, only 25 percent of high school 9th-graders obtain the degrees necessary to successfully compete in the labor market.

State headed in right direction, 'need to step up the pace,' says Twyman

William Twyman, of Barren County, represents the 2nd Supreme Court District. He is a former educator and national Milken Educator award winner. He works with the consulting firm Educational Directions. Twyman's term will expire April 14, 2014.



Twyman

Where is education in Kentucky headed?

Kentucky is headed in the right direction with its new common core (standards) and new assessment system; we simply need to step up the pace.

Why is what you do as a board member important to teachers today?

I want to help create policies and procedures that enable teachers do their jobs to the best of their ability.

What long-term goals do you have as a member of the board?

I want to do all that I can to ensure that each and every child in Kentucky gets a world-class education.

Other than parents and teachers, who – or what – has had the biggest effect on our students' educations in the last few years in your opinion?

Assessments and standards.

In your opinion, what makes Kentucky schools tick?

It is dedicated teachers and principals plus all the support staff; add in caring supportive parents and communities.

What will teachers need most from the board?

They need direction and support in order to move students to the level of world-class performers.

What are the greatest successes you have seen in Kentucky schools?

Kentucky, perhaps more than any other state, attempts to educate the whole child and in all content areas.

Other than more money, what do Kentucky schools need most?

More dedicated teachers, principals and parents supporting students as they progress through our schools.

What major change would you make to improve Kentucky schools?

Make sure we have systems in place that allow students to become world-class performers.

How will you know that the board has been successful?

When our students are performing at and above others on assessments like ACT, NRT (norm-referenced tests) and so on.

Who was your favorite teacher and why?

My high school algebra teacher. She insisted that each and every child would learn, and she did all the extra things required to make that learning possible.

What have you gained from your time as an educator that will help you on the board?

I have learned there is no replacement for top-notch teachers and principals in each of our schools across Kentucky.

Elementaries participate in fresh vegetable, fruit program

More than 30,000 students in 90 Kentucky elementary schools will enjoy fresh produce this school year as part of a federal Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program (FFVP) implemented through the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

The FFVP provides all children in participating schools with a variety of free fresh fruits and vegetables throughout the school day. It is an effective and creative way of introducing fresh fruits and vegetables as healthy snack options. The FFVP also encourages community partnerships to support the schools when they offer free fruit and vegetables to children during the school day.

The goal of the FFVP is to:

- create healthier school environments by providing healthier food choices
- expand the variety of fruits and vegetables children experience
- increase children's fruit and vegetable consumption
- make a difference in children's diets to impact their present and future health

School selection was based upon submitted applications from elementary schools that operate the National School Lunch Program and that have 50 percent or more of their students eligible for free/reduced-price meals. Priority was given to schools with the highest percentage of eligible students.

Kentucky received \$1,842,089 for the 2010-11 school year. Each participating school will receive funds to operate the program based on approximately \$55 per student enrolled as reported in October 2009.

MORE INFO...

www.fns.usda.gov

Stay up-to-date on the latest from the Kentucky Board of Education at www.kentuckyteacher.org



Beyond books

Library media specialists bring libraries to life and to the classroom

By Susan Riddell

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Becky Nelson says that, while she's a library media specialist (LMS), she also considers herself a resource.

"Though I work individually and in groups directly with students, I can teach many more of them through teamwork with their classroom teachers," said the veteran LMS at Hearn Elementary School (Franklin County). "The library and librarian are resources for all instruction."

Nelson has been an LMS for 30 years, including the last nine at Hearn Elementary. And she's seen it all.

Still, she said her main goal has stayed focused on getting students excited about reading and making sure they access accurate information from her library.

Collaboration with teachers is vital, she said.

"I plan with teachers before students embark on any big research project," said Nelson, who offers flexible scheduling to help students in their time of need. "I suggest books for read-aloud and for summer reading. I have helped to create rubrics for research projects and assessments over novels."

Nelson has worked with teachers to find examples of literary elements in children's books to use in classrooms. She's also helped special education teachers create appropriate instructional literature activities or modify regular classroom assignments for their students.

When not collaborating with teachers, Nelson is coming up with ideas to keep her students engaged in reading. They include:

- **Lunch Bunch** – students from one grade level bring their lunches to the library and eat while Nelson reads a new novel to them. They read every day until the novel is finished. Then students in a different grade level go to the library, with this

pattern alternating throughout the year.

- **Mother-Daughter Book Club** – is a monthly evening activity where girls in grades 4 and 5 go to the library with their mothers, grandmothers or an adult female friend to discuss a book everyone has read. This has morphed into a summer, community-wide event for girls in Frankfort.
- **Mock Newbery Club** – High-performing 5th-grade readers read and discussed the best books published in 2010 in an attempt to pick which books would win Newbery Medal honors. This activity encouraged students to read a variety of fictional genres and to think critically about writing. "Our group chose *When You Reach Me* by Rebecca Stead as our Newbery winner two weeks before the national committee chose that same book," Nelson said. "We were thrilled. The process worked. I hope to continue this club for distinguished readers."

Nelson has tweaked other ideas to suit the needs of her students. She did this several years ago with a Battle of the Books competition. Under her guidance, what started out at Hearn Elementary soon turned into a huge districtwide event with all elementary schools competing for top honors in reading knowledge and comprehension.

Franklin County is one of several districts in the Ohio Valley Educational Cooperative that received a three-year grant for professional development with library-to-classroom teacher collaboration. Nelson said she plans to use resources from the grant to "step up her collaboration with all grade levels."

Queens of Collaboration

Like Nelson, Lone Oak Middle School and Reidland High School (McCracken County) library media specialists Sheila Swab and



Photo by Amy Wallot

Library media specialist Becky Nelson, left, and 5th-grade language arts teacher Katisha Pickrell discuss the Mock Newbery Club for gifted readers at Hearn Elementary School (Franklin County). Nelson said collaboration with teachers in her school is vital to a library media specialist's success with students.

Terri Kirk, respectively, have a strong base of fellow LMSs in their district with whom to collaborate.

"Not only do we meet every other month as a group, our group is so dependent on each other that we call or text each other before we talk to anyone else," said Kirk, who called her group the Queens of Collaboration. "I think we have been so lucky to be able to discuss anything, throw out ideas, tell each other what worked and what didn't and just generally know that we have each others' backs."

"Several of us also collaborate outside of the district with other librarians around the area," Kirk added. "We meet once a month with the public, academic, special and other school librarians to promote library services in our community."

Kirk is in her 22nd year as an LMS and her eighth at Reidland High. Recently, the school was recognized for having an exemplary library when the president of the American Association of School Libraries conducted a nationwide tour of schools with outstanding libraries.

Kirk said it's important for teachers and library media specialists to work together in planned settings as well as impromptu ones.

"Sometimes the collaboration is 'on the fly' so that a teacher might suggest an idea, and I will share

ways that we can work together," Kirk said. "Other collaborations are more formal so that the teacher and I actually team-teach."

"I love for the students to see that the teachers and I work together to help them become more successful," Kirk added. "I would hate to work alone in a vacuum in the library. I can't see how that would be helpful to students at all."

Swab taught in a classroom for several years and is in her fifth year as the Lone Oak Middle LMS.

One of Swab's collaborative efforts involves teaching technology concepts to both students and faculty.

"I teach the technology concept and then aid the students in their project creation," Swab said. "I have created separate pages for teachers and students on my library website of sites they can use for both research and tools to use for instruction and project creation. I update the links regularly adding new links and tools as I become aware of them."

Swab opened a "Starbooks Café" in her library with the help of parent donations and her district's family resource center. She has hosted book discussion groups in the café for various groups, serving cappuccino and hot chocolate.

This year, Swab is starting an I Hate Reading Book Club. "It's an effort to reach the male popula-

tion of our school and help in our gap reduction," Swab said. "Guest speakers will be invited to meet with the group once per month for a book discussion, and I will meet with the group weekly for a reading time of different reading materials both online and in books and magazines."

As a middle school teacher, Swab said it's highly important that library media specialists keep students invested in the library as they grow older and as they go online more and more each year.

"While students are talented in finding 'stuff' on the Internet, they are not always successful in finding the 'right stuff' or the 'good stuff' on the Web," Swab said. "They don't know how to determine if what they find is valid and worthwhile, and this is where we are needed in the middle school and high school. A teacher may not have the time or the expertise to teach this to students, and we can play a vital role in education students about ethical use of technology."

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Diverse Schools to Watch have much in common

By Matthew Tungate

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Kentucky's seven 2010 Schools to Watch (STW) seem very different on paper. Four are spread across rural parts of Kentucky, while three are in Louisville suburbs. Two have fewer than 150 students, while another two have more than 700 students. Six have varying numbers of periods in a day, while one is on block scheduling. Three were named Schools to Watch for the first time, two repeated their designation, and one became the first school in Kentucky to be designated a third time.

Fran Salyers, director of the Kentucky Schools to Watch program, said that while each school faces different challenges related to its location, student demographics, levels of district support and other factors, common themes do arise. According to Salyers:

- "The schools know and articulate the academic outcomes they seek. They are taking deliberate steps to help all students achieve those outcomes by making

strategic changes in curriculum, teaching, and school services."

- "The schools hold themselves accountable for specific results. Data has an important role in the lives of these schools."
- "Each school strategically concentrates its energies on specific areas. As a result, the changes in each school are burrowing deeply into its culture."
- "A positive, encouraging learning environment has been created and maintained for both students and staff. Stakeholders are invited and welcomed in the school and communication with all stakeholders via a variety of means is stressed."
- "The schools have strong, visionary leaders who can articulate challenging goals and motivate faculty and staff to reach those goals."
- "The administrators of the schools honor the professionalism of their teachers, and there is a high level of trust between administrators and teachers."

The Kentucky Forum to Accelerate Middle Grades Reform named the seven middle level schools as Kentucky Schools to Watch earlier this year. They are:

- Adairville Elementary and Chandlers Elementary schools (both P-8) in Logan County. Adairville is the first Kentucky school to be named for the third time, and Chandlers was named for the first time. Logan County has four schools designated as Schools to Watch, Salyers said.
- Boyd County Middle School, which was named a School to Watch for the second time
- East Oldham and North Oldham middle schools. East Oldham Middle was named for the first time and North Oldham Middle for the second. The Oldham County school district has all four of its middle schools designated as Schools to Watch, Salyers said.
- Mount Washington Middle School (Bullitt County) and West Carter Middle School (Carter County) were named for the first time.

Schools to Watch is a recognition and school improvement program for middle-level schools developed by the National Forum to Accelerate Middle-Grades Reform. Schools are selected for their academic excellence, responsiveness to the needs and interests of young adolescents, and commitment to helping all students achieve at high levels. In addition, the schools have strong leadership, teachers who work together to improve curriculum and instruction, and a commitment to assessment and accountability to bring about continuous improvement. These school characteristics and replicable practices are reported as Academic Excellence, Developmental Responsiveness, Social Equity and Organizational Support.

"The Schools to Watch are indeed special; they make education so exciting that students and teachers don't want to miss a day," said Deborah Kasak, National Forum executive director. "These schools have proven that it is possible to overcome barriers to achieving

excellence, and any middle-level school in any state can truly learn from their examples."

Selection is based on a written application that requires schools to show how they meet the 37 criteria developed by the National Forum. Schools that meet the criteria are visited by a team of trained reviewers who observe classrooms; interview administrators, teachers, students and parents; and look at achievement data, suspension rates, quality of lessons and student work.

Schools are recognized for a three-year period, and at the end of three years must repeat the process to be re-designated. Kentucky has 18 Schools to Watch.

"Student achievement is the focus at these schools, but at the same time they have created a very caring and safe learning environment for all students," Salyers said. "The STW visit teams were very impressed with these schools and feel that they have much to share with other schools."

School Characteristics and Replicable Practices

Adairville School (Logan County)

- Community: Rural farming community in western Kentucky
- Enrollment: 121 in grades 6-8
- Grade levels: P-8
- School schedule: Seven-period day
- www.adairville.logan.k12.ky.us

Academic Excellence

- Rubrics are widely used as a means of letting students know teacher expectations, and students are involved in their development at times.
- A no-zero policy has been established and is enforced.
- Arts-infused instruction is present throughout the curriculum.
- Diagnostic, formative and common assessments are used regularly along with student self-assessment and self-reflection.

- Flex time has been designed to reinforce and extend learning, providing a time for students to receive needed interventions.

Developmental Responsiveness

- A daily morning assembly sets the stage for the rest of the day.
- Cooperative grouping of students is an integral part of instruction.
- CARDS program recognizes students demonstrating character, attitude, respect, dedication and success (CARDS).
- All 7th- and 8th-grade students participate in a book study, *Teenagers in the Real World*.

Social Equity

- Strong, effective collaboration between regular education and special education teachers is evident.
- Word of the Month and Ron Clark's Essential 55 are used as tools for building character in all students.

- Student Leadership Team meets regularly with principal to discuss school needs.
- Home visits help develop positive relationships and aid communication with parents and families.
- Individual Learning Plans (ILP) are developed with all students.

Organizational Support

- Learning cadres have been established to focus on curriculum and instruction as they relate to student achievement.
- The administration and culture of the school encourage teachers to research, theorize and put theory into practice.
- Early dismissal of students on Fridays provides teachers time to focus on instruction and curriculum.
- New teachers participate in the district's Professional Growth Academy.



Photos by Amy Wallot

Teacher Keith Sperry leads the middle school band during Adairville Elementary School's (Logan County) Schools to Watch celebration. Adairville Elementary is the first Kentucky school to be named a School to Watch for the third time.

- Teachers move along with students for grades 6-8, giving students the same set of teachers all three years.
- Teachers are provided with a day to go visit other schools for the purpose of observing master teachers to expand and improve their repertoire of teaching strategies.

Boyd County Middle School

- Community: Northeast Kentucky on West Virginia border, mostly rural
- Enrollment: 728
- Grade levels: 6-8
- School schedule: Eight-period day
- www.boyd.k12.ky.us/bcms/index.htm



Then 8th-grade student Clayton Meade, center in glasses, leads the student body in a choreographed dance to the Black Eyed Peas' song I Gotta Feeling during the Schools to Watch ceremony at Boyd County Middle School.

Academic Excellence

- Professional learning community (PLC) meetings are used to focus on struggling students and those in need of more time.
- Common assessments have been developed and are used in some areas and grade levels.
- Students are provided multiple ways to show their learning (e.g. PowerPoints, character cubes, projects, films).
- A computer lab is open each morning before school and staffed with a teacher for student use.

Developmental Responsiveness

- Teaming is at the heart of the school and is used to develop a personalized learning community for all students.
- Sixth-grade students adopt 5th-grade pen pals from the elementary schools, and the students exchange information about the middle school through letters.
- A designated area for socializing has been established in the lunchroom.
- The school's Prime Time program is focused on students having a small-group experience and building a relationship with an adult.

Social Equity

- Special education teachers are included on teams.
- A card system that allows for three marks before disciplinary action is taken has been used effectively.

- Many special activities are offered to encourage family involvement in the school (e.g., family nights, team breakfasts, holiday programs, science nights, orientation night).
- ### Organizational Support
- The principal attends team meetings once a week and meets regularly with team leaders.
 - A day treatment class is available at the school and provides guidance and support for assigned students.
 - Two paperless classrooms have been established.
 - Professional development is matched to teachers' Professional Growth Plans.

Chandler's Elementary School (Logan County)

- Community: Rural area in southwestern Kentucky
- Enrollment: 145 in grades 6-8
- Grade levels: P-8
- School schedule: Eight-period day
- www.chandlers.logan.k12.ky.us

Academic Excellence

- Formal diagnostic assessments are used as well as analysis of student work to identify needs of individual students.
- Teachers use "I can" statements and learning targets to inform students of what they are learning.
- Vertical and horizontal curriculum and instruction meetings are held for all content areas.



Students celebrate with the Schools to Watch trophy at Chandler's Elementary School's (Logan County) Schools to Watch celebration. The school's teachers use "I can" statements and learning targets to inform students of what they are learning.

- All students have 90-minute blocks for reading and mathematics.
- Teachers use flexible grouping strategies both during the school day and after school to provide help for students not reaching proficient performance standards.

Developmental Responsiveness

- Schoolwide positive behavior expectations were developed with input from the students.
- Instructional activities use cooperative learning groups and often provide for physical movement.
- Response to Intervention flex groups meet every morning to personalize instruction and provide additional teacher and peer interaction.
- Rachel's Challenge program has eliminated bullying in the school.

Social Equity

- Full inclusion of special needs students is practiced.
- Common planning time for collaborating and regular education teachers provides time for developing appropriate modifications.
- Observations, walkthroughs and meetings with administrators are used to analyze how well all students have equal access to knowledge and activities.

Organizational Support

- Breaks provide student time for social interactions and physical movement.
- Teachers participated in a retreat focusing on building collegial bonds and a stronger sense of collaboration while drafting interdisciplinary units of study.
- New teachers are paired with mentors within the school and participate in the district's Professional Growth Academy.
- Teachers are provided a rotation day to use for visiting other school in the district for the

purpose of observing and discussing teaching strategies.

- A school book study was conducted using *Technology in Classrooms that Work*.

East Oldham Middle School

- Community: Suburban area near Louisville
- Enrollment: 591
- Grade Levels: 6-8
- School Schedule: Five-period day
- www.oldham.kyschools.us/eoms/

Academic Excellence

- ESPN (Enriching Student Programs as Needed) is a 30-minute daily time that students are assigned to when additional help or one-on-one instruction is needed.
- Common assessments are used and analyzed to inform instruction.
- A literacy coach provides instructional support for teachers and is a very integral part of the school.
- Team meetings, content meetings and PLCs provide teachers with time to discuss ideas and instructional strategies.
- Multiple formative assessments are used in most classrooms.
- Gradual release of responsibility model is used by teachers to support student learning.

(See **Diverse** on page 10)



Students celebrate during the Schools to Watch ceremony at East Oldham Middle School (Oldham County). East Oldham Middle was named for the first time as a School to Watch in 2010.

Diverse

from page 9

Developmental Responsiveness

- Students are provided with planned physical activity daily.
- Grade level interdisciplinary learning projects motivate students to learn (e.g., water project, race cars, rockets, probability fair, children's books).
- Student-led conferences help students take responsibility for their own learning and bring more parents into the building.

Social Equity

- Behavior expectations have been established and shared with students and families.
- The school's reward system is a great motivator and is used for academics, behavior and social growth.
- Special education and regular education teachers work together to design an effective program to help students succeed within a least restrictive environment.

Organizational Support

- Classrooms are equipped with projectors, tablets and document cameras that are used by teachers to enhance instruction.
- Strong administrative team oversees the day-to-day functioning of the school, shares decision-making responsibilities and supports the school's success.
- The principal empowers her staff and, as a result they are willing to take risks and take initiative.
- Built-in early release days for instructional planning and sharing are included in the school calendar.

Mount Washington Middle School

- Community: Fast growing suburb of Jefferson County but with a significant rural population
- Enrollment: 507
- Grade levels: 6-8
- School schedule: Five-period day
- www.bullitt.kyschools.us/mwms

Academic Excellence

- Students are grouped and



Photos by Amy Wallot

Then 6th-grade student Corey Plahuta works on vocabulary during teacher Robin Miller's class at Mount Washington Middle School (Bullitt County). Students are grouped and regrouped, as needed, based on skills and academic needs within various content areas.

- regrouped, as needed, based on skills and academic needs within various content areas.
- Learning targets and agenda assignments are posted in most classrooms daily.
- PLCs meet departmentally at least twice a month for improving and implementing instructional strategies.

Developmental Responsiveness

- Students have the opportunity to be involved in school decision-making through the Student Council and Principal's Roundtable.
- Teachers attend school and community events in which students are involved.
- General's Academy provides at-risk students with additional help and support.
- All students develop an ILP through which they explore career interests and postsecondary educational options.

Social Equity

- Behavior expectations have been established and shared with students and families.
- Special effort is made to intentionally integrate teaching about cultural diversity into the curriculum.
- The school partners with many community agencies to provide for the needs of their students.

Organizational Support

- Strong working relationship between the principal and staff exists.
- By using a retired, part-time teacher, Spanish is available to students.

- The principal meets with classified staff weekly so they can communicate their concerns and opinions.
- Principal's Cabinet is a formal structure that brings together the leadership of the school.
- The district provides one early release day a month.

North Oldham Middle School

- Community: Suburban area near Louisville
- Enrollment: 799
- Grade levels: 6-8
- School schedule: Rotating block
- www.mustangs.org

Academic Excellence

- A literacy coach provides instructional support for teachers and plays a key role at the school.
- Weekly team meetings and PLCs allow teachers to plan based on specific needs and interests of students, to align curriculum and reflect on instructional practice.
- Mastery is the standard; students resubmit work until mastery is achieved.
- Socratic discussion, patterned after the way Socrates conducted learning activities in ancient Greece, is used in many classes to explore ideas in depth and breadth.
- Extended library media center hours provide greater student access for research and to technology.

Developmental Responsiveness

- Strong, intentional focus on



Then 8th-grade student Savannah Campbell glues together a toothpick bridge during teacher Carol Warren's science class at North Oldham Middle School (Oldham County). As an end-of-year project, students worked in small groups to design and construct a bridge. During the last day of class, weight was hung from the bridges to see how much they could support before breaking.

- students is evident (e.g., pictures of students in hallways, birthday bulletin board, community bulletin boards in classrooms).
- TARGET program allows students to meet in small groups with an adult to foster the development of social skills.
- Character-building activities allow students to self-assess and address their character development.

Social Equity

- Collaboration is used whenever possible, allowing maximum opportunities for the mastery of standards by all students.
- There is shared ownership for exceptional students with collaborating teachers assigned to each grade level.
- Multiple supports, including high school peer tutors, for students struggling in academic areas have been developed.
- Tolerance is intentionally taught and practiced.

Organizational Support

- Classrooms are equipped with Intelligent Classroom systems.
- Team leaders and lead

- teachers are part of the shared leadership and are also a means of empowering teachers and building leadership capacity.
- Students are given both a process grade that is based on their effort and an academic grade that indicates their mastery level of the standards.
- Faculty are provided time (i.e., common planning for each grade level, PLCs) for working and meeting with colleagues for the purpose of enhancing student achievement.
- Teachers have the opportunity to observe other teachers and reflect on the experience through written evaluation.
- A counselor is assigned to each grade level.

West Carter Middle School

- Community: Rural northeast Kentucky
- Enrollment: 447
- Grade levels: 6-8
- School schedule: Seven-period day
- www.carter.kyschools.us

(See **Diverse** on page 15)

Schools must be observant of, responsive to bullying

Editor's note: This article was submitted to Kentucky Teacher in conjunction with Kentucky Safe Schools Week (Oct. 17-23).

Karen McCuiston

Kentucky Center for School Safety

News this past January of the suicide of Phoebe Prince, a young high-school girl from Massachusetts, broke my heart. After an investigation, it was alleged that repeated physical, verbal and online abuse led to her death. Phoebe's torturous treatment brought international attention to the widespread problem of bullying in U.S. schools.

According to the National Survey on School Safety Statistics, one in three students in middle school and high school said they had been bullied in the last school year. This equates to 8.2 million students who are suffering because of bullies at school. These numbers are astounding, and something has to be done. In Phoebe's case, nine felony charges were filed against her classmates, and many accusations have been made about the teachers, school and its leadership. Even more disturbing is that Phoebe is just one of a group of students who have recently committed a new term coined "bullycide."

Many schools across Kentucky have taken a long, hard look at their bullying policies and procedures. A new awareness about what types of behaviors will not be tolerated and clear definitions of harassment and bullying has been developed. In addition, new legislation was passed and signed into law this year that addresses suicides that result from bullying. House Bill 51 requires every public middle and high school administrator to disseminate suicide-prevention awareness information to students. Senate Bill 65 requires all middle and high school teachers, counselors and principals to have two hours of suicide-prevention training each school year.

The Kentucky Center for School Safety (KCSS) wants to step up to this challenge and encourage every school across Kentucky to participate in Kentucky Safe Schools Week Oct. 17-23. A new pledge will be launched this year entitled R-E-S-P-E-C-T. This pledge reinforces the idea that respect of one's self and others will help eliminate problems surrounding a variety of school safety issues. Teachers and students are encouraged to recite the following pledge.



Photo by Amy Wallot

Jon Akers, right, speaks with (pictured clockwise from right) Woodford County Middle School Principal Stephanie Koontz, Woodford County High School social worker Sara Swinford, Woodford County Middle counselor Patti Sebastain, Woodford County High Principal Rob Akers and Woodford County Middle counselor Derby Akers about suicide prevention during a meeting at Woodford County Middle School.

"To keep Kentucky schools safe places in which to learn and work, I pledge to:

- **Realize** that violent actions have real consequences and do not solve any problems.
- **Encourage** others and myself to be responsible for the Internet sites I search as well as social network communications.
- **Stand up** for anyone who is being bullied and never bully anyone myself.
- **Prevent** bullying by reporting any suspicious behavior.
- **Explore** my options by talking with a trusted adult when I feel sad or alone.
- **Control** my texting and cell phone use, by not sending/sharing anything that is inappropriate.
- **Take a stand** and be respectful to adults, students and myself."

Every teacher and school across Kentucky is urged to participate in Kentucky Safe Schools Week. Lesson plans, interactive links and other online pledges, videos, color

"The fact is that no school can be a great school until it is a safe school first."

Arne Duncan,
U.S. Secretary of Education

pages and more will be available to download for classroom use and awareness.

KCSS also encourages teachers, principals and district staff to attend the 16th Annual Safe and Healthy Schools and Students Conference Nov. 15-16 in Louisville.

U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan recently said that "a school where children don't feel safe is a school where children

Warning signs of suicide

Some of the warning signs that a young person may be considering suicide are:

- a suddenly deteriorating academic performance
- self-mutilation
- a fixation with death or violence
- unhealthy peer relationships
- volatile mood swings or a sudden change in personality
- indications that the student is in an unhealthy, destructive or abusive relationship
- risk-taking behaviors
- signs of an eating disorder
- bullying
- symptoms of depression including withdrawal from friends and extracurricular activities, lowered self-esteem, feelings of guilt, dropping out of school or social, athletic and/or community activities

Teachers, principals and administrators can use these guidelines in responding to the warning signs:

- Ask tough questions and be persistent.
- Be prepared to act.
- Do not leave a student at imminent risk of suicide alone.
- Get help when needed.
- Use your school's support system.
- Connect with parents or guardians.

Source: Kentucky Cabinet for Health and Family Services

struggle to learn. It is a school where kids drop out, tune out and get depressed. Not just violence but bullying, verbal harassment, substance abuse, cyber-bullying and disruptive classrooms all interfere with a student's ability to learn. The fact is that no school can be a great school until it is a safe school first."

As educators, parents and stakeholders in the well-being of our students, it is our responsibility to provide a positive school climate as a foundation to start academic achievement.

MORE INFO...

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Little changes improve Ballard County student performance

By Susan Riddell

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The Ballard County school district has three schools and fewer than 1,500 students combined. Located west of Paducah, the tiny district was struggling several years ago to make sure students were reaching proficiency and their fullest potential.

Administrators met to decide on the best way to improve not only test scores but also the school climate each student experienced. In the end, the district went through several small changes in hopes of a big turnaround.

Mission accomplished.

Ballard County has made steady improvement in test scores thanks to new curriculum alignment. Principals at all three schools said that alignment was the single biggest factor in getting things turned around.

"When I got here, the biggest concern was getting people focused on (Kentucky's) *Core Content* and instruction," said Ballard County Elementary School Principal Phillip Harned, who is in his fourth year. "Curriculum needed to be aligned. We set up content area meetings to make sure that all content was covered to mastery. Curriculum maps were created as well."

Casey Allen previously served as the Ballard County Middle School principal but is now an instructional supervisor for the district.

"We also started focusing on creating a positive culture in our building that made our school a place where students wanted to be," Allen said. "We started looking at the relationships we had or didn't have with students and how that was affecting our instruction."

At Ballard Memorial High School, staff created learning checks for the end of each nine-week period to make sure content was mastered. "Teachers collaborated in departments to analyze the learning check results to determine what was mastered, what needed to be reviewed and what needed to be taught again," said Principal Donald Shively.

All three schools have made sig-

Program gives students real-world experience with elderly patients

Students at Ballard Memorial High School have a unique learning opportunity that gives an early start to anyone interested in nursing or working with elderly patients.

Students can obtain Medicaid nurse aide certification while in high school by working in a clinical experience at Life Care Center of La Center, a long-term health care facility for the elderly.

"Students enter the facility with classroom knowledge then utilize those skills alongside the employees," Principal Donald Shively said. "They also are given the opportunity to assist and/or follow all disciplines in the facility from therapy and activities to administrative nursing."

To distinguish themselves from full-time staff, students wear school-colored scrubs to gain firsthand experiences with patient care.

"Being the only long-term care facility in the county, Life Care Center has mostly Ballard County residents, which allows students the opportunity to learn county history from the residents as they care for them," Shively said. "They also are able to meet family members of the residents, which helps the community to learn the abilities and knowledge that the students have gained in the classroom."

Medicaid Nurse Aide is a required course for most of the Kentucky nursing programs such as the LPN and RN programs at West Kentucky Community and Technical College, according to Shively, so students who participate in this opportunity can receive dual credit.

"This program strengthens our ties to community businesses in allowing us to perform clinical experiences in the facilities with firsthand experience," Shively said. "Many of the full-time and part-time staff are employees directly from this class with shifts that have been designed by the facility to meet the time requirements for students."

Family members of residents also get "to interact with the students while they care for their loved one," Shively added, adding to the relationship between students and those in the community.



Photo by Amy Wallot

Ballard Memorial High School (Ballard County) then juniors Blake Rundles and Ami Wiggins make the bed for Fern Spahn at Life Care Center of La Center. Both students are in teacher Cindy Allardin's Nursing Assistant class, which tends to patients at the center. Students at Ballard Memorial High have the opportunity to follow all disciplines in the facility from therapy and activities to administrative nursing.

nificant progress in raising their percentage of proficient and distinguished students on the Kentucky Core Content Test. In 2008, Ballard County Elementary raised its percentage of proficient and distinguished students by 21 points in science and 23 in on-demand writing. Harned said a writing coordinator who models lessons for teachers has really paid off at his school.

In 2008, Ballard County Middle made steady gains in all core content subjects with the exception of on-demand writing (which dropped by less than half a percentage point) in regard to profi-

cient and distinguished students.

"Implementation of professional learning communities (PLCs) to focus on research-based strategies and diverse student learning styles helped us," Shively said of the high school. "PLCs have changed the conversations in our school from talk about specific curriculum to the variety of strategies that all teachers are using in their classrooms. PLCs also allow us to focus on analyzing student work and making adjustments to teaching delivery."

"Implementing inquiry-based units in math and science where students have to analyze their proj-

ects and predict outcomes using the writing process have not only helped math and science, but also writing scores," Shively added.

"We also implemented intense Response to Intervention strategies two years ago," Harned said. "We focused on specific interventions for specific students. We identified them, worked to meet their needs with interventions, then monitored their progress to make sure it was working."

While the effort to revamp teaching and learning in Ballard County was a collective concept, the administration at each school was allowed to make

individual changes as well. Among those small changes schools made to better their students' educational experience were:

- Ballard County Elementary – "Once teachers had their curriculum aligned and the instructional strategies in their toolkits, they were given the freedom to run their classrooms as they saw fit," Harned said. "Teachers were asked to find their weaknesses and then were given opportunities to attend professional development that met their needs."
- Ballard County Middle – "I don't know that our cultural change was radical because everyone saw the need for it," Allen said. "One thing that really seemed to work was getting all of the teachers on the same page with high expectations for our students. Students and parents needed to hear it from the educators that we wanted them to be high performers, and that we knew they could do it."
- Ballard Memorial High – Shively said the high school instituted Success Lab, which enforces a zero-tolerance policy on students who don't complete and turn in their homework. "We tied attendance to participation in graduation and prom to reinforce our belief that students have to be at school to learn," he said.

While lacking resources, opportunities for more advanced classes and other grade-level schools with which to collaborate held the district back at times, administrators and faculty stayed focused on student needs to get by.

"Our school has always approached each issue that comes up with the idea we can solve any problems that come to us if we work together," Allen said.

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LEADERSHIP LETTER

Compiled by Susan Riddell, susan.riddell@education.ky.gov

Education advocate, innovator passes away

Robert F. Sexton, the longtime executive director of the Prichard Committee for Academic Excellence and a long-respected education advocate, died Aug. 26 following a struggle with cancer. Sexton was 68.

Sexton headed the Prichard Committee from the time it was formed in 1983 to advocate for education in Kentucky. Before joining the Prichard Committee, Sexton was deputy director of the Council on Higher Education, which was replaced by the Council on Postsecondary Education created by the 1997 higher education reform.

"I have known Bob for years, and working with him on the Prichard Committee for Academic Excellence gave me the opportunity to see firsthand how deeply he valued Kentucky and how committed he was to improving education for all our students," Gov. Steve Beshear said. "His passing leaves an enormous void in our state. Many Kentuckians may not realize the revolutionary impact Bob had on shaping our state's education practices, but it is not an exaggeration to say that Bob Sexton has influenced and enriched the education experience for generations of students. The most fitting memorial to Bob Sexton will be for us to continue to build on the enduring legacy of quality education he has left us."

Terry Holliday, Kentucky's Commissioner of Education, a post created by the Kentucky Education Reform Act of 1990 for which the Prichard Committee worked to see enacted, said Sexton had "an unswerving dedication to strengthening Kentucky's public education system." Holliday called Sexton's passing both a personal and professional loss.

Over 34 years, Sexton's work grew to include not only Kentucky schools, but the nation's. He believed passionately that all children could learn at high levels and that all parents could be empowered to know about and help their children's teachers and schools. He deeply respected the teaching profession and believed that teachers could also reach high levels on behalf of their students. He advocated for their respect among the professions and for higher salaries.

Sexton spent most of his career building the Prichard Committee for Academic Excellence, an unusual and exceptional non-profit organization that reached across the state to include parents and grandparents, educators, policy analysts, and politicians in strong organized efforts to improve Kentucky schools and universities.

He also served on the boards of the Kentucky Long-Term Policy Research Center and the New Opportunity School for Women. He was a founder of the Governor's Scholars Program and the Kentucky Center for Public Issues. He was a visiting scholar at Harvard University and the Annenberg Institute for School Reform at Brown University, according to information released by the Prichard Committee.

His national board service included Editorial Projects in Education (publishers of *Education Week* and *Teacher Magazine*), the Education Trust, the Center for Teaching Quality, the Education Commission of the States and the American Association for Higher Education. He also served on advisory groups for several national foundations.

A memorial service and tribute to Sexton's life and career is set for Oct. 16 at 1:30 p.m. at the Haggin Auditorium on the campus of Transylvania University in Lexington. Memorials may be made to the Robert F. Sexton Legacy Fund, Prichard Committee for Academic Excellence, P.O. Box 1658, Lexington KY 40588.

Teacher Leader master's program

Pikeville College and Morehead State University (MSU) are working together this year to sponsor the Teacher Leader master's program.

Through this partnership, aspiring teacher leaders will register as MSU students but attend classes at Pikeville College both on campus and online. Faculty at both Pikeville and Morehead State will teach the classes.

A foundational concept of the Teacher Leader program is that proven research and educational theories must be tested, tried and evaluated in today's classrooms.

Program participants will be involved in field-based work in each of the core courses, and have the opportunity to examine facts compared to possibility.

Aspiring Teacher Leaders will be able to choose from three areas of specialization: writing/reading (with an option to pursue National Board certification), Interdisciplinary P-5 and middle grades.

For more information, contact James Hurley, jhurley@pc.edu, at (606) 218-5272, or David Barnett, d.barnett@moreheadstate.edu, at (606) 783-2261.

Student banners for KSBA conference

One of the highlights of the Kentucky Schools Boards Association (KSBA) annual conference is the visual celebration of public education in Kentucky created by students. Students now have another opportunity to put their talents on display for the 75th annual conference, scheduled for Feb. 4-6, at the Galt House East in Louisville.

Student-created banners depicting the conference theme, "KSBA 75: Building Future Leaders," will be displayed in the hallways of the conference meeting areas.

Blank ready-made banners can be ordered from Shumaker's Inc., which is requesting that districts fax their orders for better record keeping. The fax number is (859) 254-4792.

Those interested will need to request Shumaker Banner No. 5845, in a cardboard shipping tube. Allow one week for delivery. (KSBA has arranged a minimal cost of \$49 for these materials, including shipping and handling, payable by the school district to Shumaker's.)

2011 banner guidelines are:

- Banners will be hung vertically due to limited space. Students should not design a banner to be hung horizontally.
- Students should paint or affix their school district's name somewhere on the front of the banner so viewers will know where the art was created and to facilitate return of the banners.
- All banners must depict the conference theme to be considered for display.
- Banners should be shipped in the cardboard tube to: KSBA Conference Banners, 260 Democrat Drive, Frankfort, KY 40601 by Jan. 17, 2011.
- The KSBA Annual Conference Planning Committee reserves the right to select banners for display. Banners also may be displayed in cooperation with the Kentucky Art Education Association.
- Banners will be returned to districts by mid-June.

For more information, contact Mary Davis, Mary.Davis@ksba.org, at (800) 372-2962.



Photo by Amy Wallot

Student leadership

Wayne County High School Junior ROTC (JROTC) instructor Chief Warrant Officer 4 William Inman helps senior Diamond Dick, right, prepare her introduction for an upcoming JROTC assembly at the school. Inman and 1st Sgt. George Snyder started the program at the school 18 years ago. They work with about 125 cadets in the program. "Everything you learn in school, we teach you how to use," Inman said. "We motivate people to be better citizens." Also pictured are senior Johnny Lewis, left, and junior Cole Blevins.

Visit www.kentuckyteacher.org beginning Nov. 2 to register and receive updated content notifications directly to your e-mail inbox!

BULLETIN BOARD

Compiled by Susan Riddell, susan.riddell@education.ky.gov



Photo by Amy Wallot

Monticello Elementary School
(Monticello Independent)

Announcements

Guidelines for library media specialists

Beyond Proficiency @ your Library has been posted to the Kentucky Department of Education (KDE) website. This is a web-based tool to guide Kentucky library media specialists, school administrators and school-based decision making councils in creating and maintaining effective library media programs for the 21st century. This set of guidelines from KDE aligns with national library standards and provides a framework for the effective management of a high-quality school library media program.

<http://go.usa.gov/cLJ>

Conferences & Workshops

Fall technology event

Registration is now open for the Kentucky Society for Technology in Education Fall Technology Event set for Oct. 26 in Frankfort. This annual training offers new chief information officers, district technology coordinators, and district computer and network technicians an opportunity to connect and learn about important information relative to their position and responsibilities. Two new threads for technology integration specialists/technology resource teachers and student technology leadership program coordinators have been added. For more information, contact Jeffrey L. Jones at (859) 381-4124.

www.kyste.org

Management training and workshops

HSC Workshops is a consulting and training firm providing continuing education and professional development training in several areas including management training and development as well as programs for educators and mental health professionals. Workshops will take place Oct. 21 in Cincinnati at the Holiday Inn North, and Oct. 22 in Lexington, also at the Holiday Inn North. For more information, e-mail info@hscseminars.org or call (602) 674-0911.

www.hscseminars.org

KAHPERD conference

The Kentucky Association for Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance (KAHPERD) will hold its fall convention Nov. 14-16 in Lexington. The theme of the

2010 convention is "One Step at a Time" and offers more than 70 sessions designed for elementary and secondary teachers, administrators, coaches, and recreation and dance personnel. This year's convention will also include two sessions on program reviews presented by the Kentucky Department of Education. To register, contact Lonnie Davis at Lonnie.davis@insightbb.com or visit the website to register online.

www.kahperd.com

Contests & Other Events

Mock elections

The Office of the Secretary of State received a federal grant from the U.S. Elections Assistance Commission to conduct mock elections for 50,000 high school students in Kentucky. The goal of the grant is to demystify the voting process for high school students by allowing them to vote on the same equipment used in their county's polling places. Schools interested in hosting a mock election should contact Patrick Keal at (502) 564-3490.

<http://sos.ky.gov>

Response to Intervention webinar

The University of Louisville will host a webinar Oct. 13 from 4-5 p.m. EDT on implementing RTI (Response to Intervention) at the secondary level. Amy Lingo and Regina Hirn will conduct the webinar. This session will examine the key academic indicators that educators must consider when identifying and intervening with struggling students. Specific program interventions and scheduling issues pertinent to high schools will be examined. The target audience includes principals, teachers, school psychologists, counselors and reading specialists.

<https://louisville.edu/education/srp/abri/trainings>

Stock Market Game

In the Stock Market Game, student teams from grades 4-12 receive a virtual \$100,000 to invest in stocks and mutual funds using a real-world Internet simulation. Students research and evaluate companies, calculate stock transactions, and make investment decisions based on what they've learned. They work together in teams developing leadership, organization, negotiation and critical-thinking skills as they compete for the top spot. Rankings are updated daily and awards are given to the top-ranked teams.

Teachers have the flexibility of choosing how much or how little class time to devote to the program.

www.econ.org/smg

Kentucky LifeSmarts

Kentucky LifeSmarts invites class teams to participate in the 2010-11 LifeSmarts program challenge. The competition tests student knowledge in the areas of personal finance, health and safety, the environment, technology, and consumer rights and responsibilities. The goal is for students to have fun while learning and improving their marketplace skills. The top scoring teams will compete in the state LifeSmarts championship in Frankfort on March 3, 2011, for a chance to represent Kentucky at the national competition in Hollywood, Calif., April 30-May 3. The state competition is moderated by consumer experts from the Office of the Attorney General, the Department of Financial Institutions, the Department of Insurance, the Better Business Bureau and a consumer reporter from an area television station.

www.lifesmarts.org

Old Fort Harrod State Park

Old Fort Harrod State Park in Harrodsburg is inviting teachers and their students to schedule field trips at the first permanent English-speaking settlement west of the Allegheny Mountains. Recently added activities for students include soap-making, candle-dipping and tomahawk-throwing demonstrations. In addition, a "hands on" cabin with items students can touch, feel and play with will soon be offered for visitors. For more information or to schedule a field trip, contact David Coleman at (859) 734-3314.

www.oldfortharrod.org

KaLightoscope Christmas

The Galt House in Louisville is hosting KaLightoscope Christmas Nov. 18, 2010-Jan. 3, 2011. KaLightoscope Christmas involves towering luminaries inspired by the art of ancient China. The luminaries are being unveiled for the first time in the United States at this event. Students can meet the artists while teachers can work from a school-system approved curriculum. For more information, contact Mary Alice Greenamyre, magreenamyre@galthotel.com, at (800) 939-4258.

www.KaLightoscope.com

BULLETIN BOARD (continued)

Resources

Open House

The Kentucky Department of Education (KDE) now offers Open House, a section of the KDE website composed of multiple applications, such as the Kentucky Student Information System, MUNIS, and data from other sources, such as the state assessment system. Reports derived from these sources are provided here for all stakeholders within the state. Visitors to Open House also can see detailed information on Adequate Yearly Progress, Kentucky Core Content Test scores, college/career readiness, Iowa Tests of Basic Skills data and achievement gap data of each Kentucky public school and district.

www.openhouse.education.ky.gov

Kentucky Arts Council

The Kentucky Arts Council (KAC) has these resources available for teachers:

- New and improved grant application and guidelines from KAC. Teachers can apply for up to two grants per school per grant cycle and the PD opportunity has been expanded. KDE is offering PD credit for all TIP PDs this year.

<http://artscouncil.ky.gov/guide/prog6/TIP11sGuidelines.pdf>

- The National Symphony Orchestra is coming to Kentucky in February 2011, and free education programs are available by application. All applications will be reviewed and teachers will be notified whether their application is accepted no later than mid-November.

<http://artscouncil.ky.gov/NSO/NSO.htm>

For more information, contact Carrie A. Nath, Carrie.Nath@ky.gov, (502) 564-3757, ext. 486

www.artscouncil.ky.gov

Multi-media and energy curriculum

Louisville Gas and Electric Company and Kentucky Utilities Company have partnered with the Library Video Company and Safari Montage to deliver free online streaming video resources. These series include an Energy for Children Series (grades K-4) and Energy in Action Series (grades 5-8). Each 23-minute video is correlated to *Kentucky Core Content*, offers assessment for students as well as a teacher's guide that includes a summary of the video, key vocabulary, viewing discussion questions, follow-up activities and additional Internet and print resources. To learn more or to request your login and password information, e-mail

Childrens.EnergyEducation@eon-us.com or call the Children's Energy Education Program (866) 370-7772.

Interactive adventure games

Mission U.S. is a new multimedia project featuring free interactive adventure games set throughout U.S. history. The first game, Mission 1: "For Crown or Colony?" puts players in the shoes of Nat Wheeler, a 14-year-old printer's apprentice in 1770 Boston. As players complete tasks throughout the city, they meet everyone from merchants to soldiers, sailors to poets, Patriots to Loyalists. The game reveals rising tensions threatening to come to a head and, ultimately, players must choose where their loyalties lie. This website provides information and materials to support the use of Mission 1 in your classroom as well as downloadable free teacher resources and materials. Free workshops are available by contacting Teresa Day at tday@ket.org.

www.mission-us.org/pages/about

NASA educational products

NASA offers educational resources for use with students in kindergarten through college, as well as resources for the education community. Many of NASA's educa-

tional products are quick and easy to find on the NASA website. Teachers can visit the NASA Blast Back to School page to find educational resources and NASA events taking place in their area. From the site, information is available on NASA Explorer Schools, NASA Summer of Innovation, opportunities for students and educators, National Space Grant College and Fellowship Program, Taking Up Space Blog, Go Backstage with NASA Education, homework topics for students, NASA's Education Resources, Easy ways to obtain NASA educational materials, find NASA teaching materials, and NASA's Educator Resource Center Network.

www.nasa.gov

Special Recognition

New president of KCEE

Kathie Hickey is the newest president for the Kentucky Council on Economic Education (KCEE), the state's only non-profit organization to provide professional development to K-16 educators in economic, financial and entrepreneurial education. Jan Mester, who has served as president since May 2002 and on the council for 25 years, retired Aug. 31. Mester will continue to serve as a program consultant for KCEE in her retirement.

Diverse from page 10

Academic Excellence

- PLC meetings are used for analyzing common assessments for instructional impact and curriculum adjustments.
- The progress of individual students is monitored weekly, and when students are not progressing satisfactorily they are identified and interventions implemented.
- Breakfast and lunch buddies provide students with additional time to complete work that was not turned in during class.
- Job-embedded professional development is practiced and is being applied through the curriculum, instruction and assessment.

Developmental Responsiveness

- A summer camp brings together the incoming 6th-graders from the three feeder schools in a fun setting and helps prepare them for the upcoming year.
- Sixth-graders are given time to develop and connect as a class through morning time in the cafeteria and by being housed in a separate wing of the school.
- School's Take Seven initiative provides all students with daily physical activity.

Social Equity

- Student behavior expectations are taught as a class lesson twice a year and are consistently applied.
- Students are recognized by their lockers being "tagged" when they are involved in school activities and for mastery of standards and good attendance.
- Implementation of the Positive Behavior Intervention and Support program has lowered office referrals.

Organizational Support

- School leadership has sought outside advice and expertise to spur and maintain school improvement efforts.
- The principal and assistant principal have offices on different floors to be more visible and accessible.
- Through their restructuring plan, ongoing collaboration with a neighboring middle school has been established.
- All students have both reading and language arts as well as two mathematics classes.

MORE INFO...

www.schoolstowatch.org

Fran Salyers, fran.salyers@eku.edu, (859) 622-1513



Photo by Amy Wallot

Tiffany Porter and Tori Brown work together studying mitosis during teacher Jenny Knipp's 7th-grade science class at West Carter Middle School (Carter County). At West Carter Middle, progress of individual students is monitored weekly, and when students are not progressing satisfactorily they are identified and interventions are implemented.



Photo by Amy Wallot

Fairly entertaining

Deming High School (Robertson County) juniors Jessica French, left, and Kara McCoy pet goats during the Kentucky State Fair on Aug. 19. They are both members of the FFA under adviser Frank Gifford. Gifford said the fair is a great educational opportunity for students of all ages. "My students look forward to competing in the FFA contests held at the fair each year," he added. "These contests allow students to display their knowledge and skills but also allow them to interact and get to know other students of their age from across the state."

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ACT results for juniors show improvement, gains

Results from the 2010 administration of the ACT to Kentucky's public school juniors show improvements in all subject areas and higher percentages of students ready for college-level coursework.

Overall, Kentucky juniors improved their average composite ACT score from 18.2 in 2009 to 18.5 in 2010. Scores improved in English (17.3 in 2009 to 17.8 in 2010), mathematics (18.2 to 18.3), reading (18.4 to 18.9) and science (18.5 to 18.7).

The percentage of students prepared for college-level courses, based on ACT benchmarks, also improved in three of four subjects. The percent improved from 46 to 49 percent in English composition, 21 to 22 percent in algebra and 30 to 35 percent in social science. Fifteen percent of students were prepared for biology, compared to 16 percent the previous year.

"We are beginning to see the benefits of an

Average ACT scores unchanged

Average ACT scores for Kentucky's 2010 public high school graduates were mostly constant from those in 2009, although more students met college-ready benchmarks in mathematics and science according to the Kentucky Department of Education and the Council on Postsecondary Education.

ACT Inc. developed College Readiness Benchmarks in English, mathematics, science and reading. The benchmark scores are:

- 18 or higher on the ACT English Test
- 22 or higher on the ACT Mathematics Test
- 21 or higher on the ACT Reading Test
- 24 or higher on the ACT Science Test

In 2010, 52 percent of Kentucky students met the benchmark in English, the same percentage

early focus on college and career readiness; however, there is much work remaining," said Kentucky Education Commissioner Terry Holliday. "Beginning in 2010-11, as mandated by 2009's Senate Bill 1 (SB 1), high schools across the commonwealth are required to partner with postsecondary institutions to provide interventions that will ensure more students graduate from

as in 2009. The percentage in mathematics was up to 25 percent in 2010 from 24 percent in 2009. The percentage dropped from 39 percent in 2009 to 37 percent in 2010 in reading, and was up from 18 percent in 2009 to 19 percent in 2010 in science. Overall, 14 percent of students met benchmarks in all four in 2010, up from 13 percent in 2009.

The 2010 composite ACT score for Kentucky public school students is 19.0, compared to 2009's composite of 19.1. Nationally, the 2010 composite score is 21.0, and the composite for 2009 was 21.1. The national composite score includes both public and non-public school test-takers.

MORE INFO...

<http://go.usa.gov/xi0>

"In September, KDE released information that shows the percentages of public high school graduates who are college- and career-ready. I feel certain our administrators, teachers, parents and students will rise to the challenge of making even greater improvements in the future."

As mandated by KRS 158.6453, all of Kentucky's public school juniors participate in the ACT, which assesses English, reading, mathematics and science and is scored on a scale of 1 to 36. The cost of the exam is paid for by state funds. In spring 2010, 44,390 public school juniors took the ACT.

MORE INFO...

<http://go.usa.gov/c06>

Visit
www.kentuckyteacher.org
to get the latest education
news from KDE and around
the state every week!